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April 1899*

ANNUAL REPORT for 1898
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH
to the
AYLSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

To the Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the AYLSHAM RURAL
DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you a report on the health and
sanitary condition of your district for the year 1898.

POPULATION:- Basing my calculations on the decrease by 255 of
the population in the decennial period 1881 - 1891, I
estimate the population in the middle of 1898 to be
17,030.

BIRTHS:- The total number of births during the year was 456.
Males 237, Females 219.
The birth-rate stands at 26.7 somewhat lower than last
year.

DEATHS:- The deaths registered numbered 290, giving a death
rate of 17.02, a few points higher than last year, when
it was 16.7. It is quite possible, however, it may be
found at the next census that the population has not
continued to decrease in the proportion of the 1881 -
1891 decennial period. Should this prove the case the
actual death rate would be some points lower than shown
by my calculations. The total number of deaths in each
of the last three years shows a somewhat remarkable uni-
formity. In 1896 - 290, 1897 - 287, and in 1898 - 290

INFANT MORTALITY:- The number of deaths of infants under one year
was 61, a proportion of 21 per cent of deaths at all
ages, and giving a death-rate per 1000 births of 133.77.
This is higher than last year, but as will be seen from
the statistical tables not due to any special class of
disease, but must be attributed to causes ever assailing
infant life, which have so often been alluded to in
former reports.

OLD AGE MORTALITY:- The number of deaths registered at over 65 was
139, that is 47.9 per cent of total deaths, giving an
old age mortality of 8.16 per 1000 population. This
high proportion of deaths in advanced life must not be
taken without reserve as indicative of the longevity of
the inhabitants of this district. It must be remem-
bered that in rural districts the average age of inhabitants
is greater than it is in a town, owing to the younger

MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH:-

The district was comparatively free from these diseases, and no deaths were registered as due to them. This is the second year that the district has enjoyed comparative immunity from Measles. At the close of the year, however, outbreaks at Marsham and Coltishall gave indications of the re-appearance of this malady.

The Inspector reports the following sanitary work carried out during the past year.

Nine new drains have been laid. Sixteen new privies have been erected and fourteen have been altered and repaired.

Eighteen wells have received attention including the sinking of 9 new ones.

WATER SUPPLY :

During the past year the prolonged drought, resulting in the partial drying up of many wells in the district, has been the cause of much trouble and inconvenience to cottagers and others. In many instances no supply of water suitable for drinking purposes was available within a considerable distance of the houses. On the other hand a larger number of wells than usual have received attention, by being cleaned out, deepened or furnished with new wats. When the springs again rise an improvement in the water supply will result.

In my reports for 1896 and 1897 I devoted considerable space to the consideration of the sanitary condition of those localities in your district, which, from the crowding together of houses, approach in character urban districts.


I have shown the most glaring evil to be the accumulation of liquid filth in cesspools and deep privy bins, and pointed out the danger of pollution of soil and wells from leakage of foul matter. To emphasize my previous remarks I need only refer to the two fatal cases of Diphtheria recorded in this year's report, shown to be due to the pollution of a well from a deep privy bin.

The existence of liquid filth within twenty-five yards of a house or well must always constitute a source of danger, and should be regarded per se a nuisance and dangerous to health. The pail system is a sure and certain safeguard, but, where local opposition renders this impracticable, I would suggest that surface level privy bins should replace the deep and dangerous privy-pits, which are at present almost universal in your district.

In conclusion, I desire to congratulate the Council on a year remarkable for the insignificant amount of infectious disease, and an exceedingly low zymotic death rate. There remains, however, the danger that this very satisfactory state of the public health at the present time may confirm the opinion held by some that the Aylsham Rural District enjoys a peculiar immunity which renders any expenditure for the improvement of its sanitary condition an unnecessary extravagance.

I have the honour to remain

Your obedient Servant,
HERBERT H. BACK.



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DIPHTHERIA :

Five cases were notified, but three houses only were concerned. In one instance, where two fatal cases occurred, the cause was distinctly traced to the leakage of a deep privy bin into the drinking water well, the quantitative analysis of the water showing it to be of a most dangerous character, necessitating a new well being sunk. No spread of the disease to other houses resulted from any of these outbreaks.

SCARLET FEVER :-

As in my report for the previous year I show in a tabular form the incidence of this disease as to locality and time of year. I am glad to be able to report that fewer cases have been notified, and that no deaths have been registered as due to this disease, the cases being, as a rule, of a mild type. Of the 71 notifications 17 were received from Banningham where the disease was present in a mild form from February to August but did not assume at any time serious proportions. In Foulsham the disease was present during July, August, September and October, sixteen cases being notified.

I have little doubt that many mild cases occurred which were not recognised as scarlet fever by the parents of the children affected, and that it was through these cases that the disease was mainly spread.

TABLE showing incidence of Scarlet Fever as to time of year and locality in the AYLSHAM RURAL DISTRICT for the year 1933

<u>SCARLET FEVER</u>				<u>NO DEATHS</u>								
	Alby	Aylsham	Aylsham Workhouse	Banningham	Colby	Erpingham	Foulsham	Marsham	Reepham	Themelthorpe	Thwaite Common	Wool Norton
January		3	2			2					1	10
February	2	1		1							3	15
March	1	1		1								3
April	1	1										2
May		1							1			2
June				3				1				4
July				1			5					6
August				1			6					7
September							1	1			2	4
October							4			2		12
November					3							1
December												
	4	3	2	12	3	2	16	2	1	2	6	7
												71

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